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WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON,
PROTECTOR OF FORT WAYNE

FOREWORD

William Henry Harrison, aide to Anthony Wayne at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, First Territorial Governor of the Indiana Territory, victor at the Battle of Tippecanoe, Protector of Fort Wayne in 1812, victor at the Battle of the Thames, victor at the siege of Fort Meigs, Whig Politician, and President of the United States, is the subject of this little pamphlet. A definitive biography of this great American is in existence and his record is readily traced. However, it is primarily as one of the founders of Indiana and as the protector of Fort Wayne that he interests us. We have sought to trace in simple narrative his public and military career through the stirring events which culminated in the abandonment of the siege of Fort Wayne in 1812. In the years that followed he made substantial contributions and was indeed a maker of history. We have felt, however, that the purpose of this subject is best served by terminating the narrative with the end of Harrison's local services in Indiana.

William Henry Harrison was born in Virginia February 9, 1773. His father was Benjamin Harrison, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The Harrison family was one of the oldest and most respected families of Virginia. The great grandfather of William, though he died young, was the presiding officer of the House of Delegates of Virginia. His son, the grandfather of William Henry and father of Benjamin, was a man of considerable wealth and of vast influence in the colonies. At his death he left several sons, some of whom later held considerable rank, not only in the legislative assembly of the colony, but in the provincial army during the Revolutionary war. He and two of Benjamin's sisters were killed simultaneously by a stroke of lightning. Benjamin Harrison went early into public life. In this his ancestors had long been distinguished and it was natural that he, likewise, should receive recognition. He began his public career in 1764 as a member of the legislature of Virginia. Benjamin Harrison's possessions in the country were large, his personal influence was extensive and commanding, and his family connections were distinguished. All of these factors made it reasonable that the British Royal Government of Virginia desired to enlist him in their favor. He could reasonably hope to derive every advantage from the favor of the British Crown. Accordingly, he was offered a seat in the executive council of Virginia--a station analogous to that of a privy councilor in England. This was tempting bait to an ambitious young man; but as, even at that time, the measures of the British ministry indicated an oppressive spirit, he refused the proffered dignity and always exerted his influence for the benefit of the people. When the time came for active resistance to arbitrary acts of the Royal government, Benjamin Harrison was not backward. Insensible to every personal advantage, he, without hesitation or delay, on the first breaking out of the revolutionary troubles, formed the generous resolution to cling to the cause of his country in defense of her rights and independence. He thereby placed his property,

his life, and all his hopes on the altar of that country. In a word, he would rise or fall with the fortunes of America. Such unbiased zeal naturally inspired the people with confidence in his fidelity. He had already given ample proofs of his talents, and he evinced clearly his qualifications for offices of the highest trust. He was, therefore, elected to represent the state of Virginia in the Continental Congresses of 1774, 1775, and 1776. He consecrated his name when he signed the immortal Declaration of Independence. It is related that, while signing the instrument, he happened to stand near Mr. Gerry, of Massachusetts, who was of slender and spare form, while he was very corpulent. Turning to him, after laying down the pen, he said, facetiously, "When the time of hanging comes, I shall have the advantage over you. It will be over with me in a minute, but you will be kicking in air half an hour after I am gone."

Mr. Harrison was particularly useful as chairman of the board of war. After he resigned his legislative seat in 1777, he was elected to the house of Burgesses of Virginia and was immediately chosen speaker. He occupied this position until 1783 when he became chief magistrate of the State in the place of Governor Nelson who had resigned; he was twice reelected. In 1783, he retired to private life. This step proved to be only temporary, for in 1788, he became a member of the convention of Virginia that ratified the constitution of the United States. Of the first committee appointed by this body, that of privileges and elections, he was chosen chairman. His age and infirmities, however, prevented him from taking an active part in the debates. He advocated the adoption of the constitution with certain amendments. In all these dignified stations his conduct was decisive and beneficial to the country. On every occasion he showed so much spirit, patriotic zeal, and wisdom, that, with each successive gradation of office, he rose in the esteem,

affection, and confidence of his fellow citizens. At length he reached the pinnacle reserved to the Washingtons, the Henrys, the Randolphs, and other illustrious men who formed that splendid constellation of worthies which has immortalized Virginia.

During the Revolutionary War, he was untiring in the performance of these important duties. The journals of Congress are replete with repeated testimonials of the implicit trust reposed in his talents and fidelity by that body. He appears as one of the three members nominated to proceed to Washington's camp in the year 1775 in order to persuade the army to extend their term of service. Again, he was one of the committee appointed to determine whether New York should be burned or defended. After that, he became chairman of that memorable assembly in which that momentous subject, the Declaration of Independence, was debated.

Honored, and deserving of honor, the father of General Harrison lived until the year 1791, when at the age of sixty-five he died of gout; he left behind him three sons, the youngest of whom was William Henry.

Though the property of Mr. Benjamin Harrison had been large, it was not sufficient at the time of his death to place every branch of his numerous offspring in a state of opulent independence suitable to their standing and according to the customs of the society in which they lived. In his own talents, had they been exclusively devoted to the improvement of his fortune, he had a perennial spring of wealth; but those had been almost entirely bestowed upon public concerns. His time had been so engrossed by the official duties which he had to perform at a distance from home that he had neglected his private affairs, and had impaired his material resources. Office, which in all times and countries has tended to enrich the possessor, brought nothing but glory to our patriots of that day. While Mr. Harrison was asserting his country's independence, he was consuming his family's patrimony. He was not addicted to any of those wasteful sports, nor to any of those degrading

vices on which splendid fortunes are too often dissipated. His establishment at Berkley was a model of elegant comfort and liberal but correct hospitality. Plain good sense presided and banished that thoughtlessness and extravagance which ruined many of the Virginians. Nevertheless, his fortune began to fall to waste. This suggested to him the expediency of giving his sons an education that would qualify them for lucrative as well as honorable pursuits in life. Thus, when young Harrison had attained the age of young manhood his inheritance included little more than his good name.

William Henry entered upon his education after his elder brothers had finished theirs and had settled in business. At an early age he attended a grammar-school from which, in due time, he was sent to Hampden SYDNEY College where he remained until his fourteenth year. Thereafter he attended an academy in Southampton County. Here he remained until he entered his seventeenth year. Then the principal pronounced him well qualified to commence the study of medicine, for which he was destined by his father. He was then placed for a short period under the tuition of Doctor Leiper, a practicing physician of respectable standing in Richmond.

It was while William Henry was on his journey to Philadelphia to continue the study of medicine that Benjamin Harrison died. Soon after the death of his father ~~and the completion of his education within the venerable walls of William and Mary College~~, he came under the guardianship of the celebrated Robert Morris, the great financier of the Revolution. The death of the elder Harrison influenced William Henry to abandon altogether a profession which he had consented to enter merely to gratify that gentleman. The cordial reception he met from Rush, Shippen, and Wistar, eminent medical professors, on account of the services rendered by his father during the progress of the revolution, was insufficient to shake his purpose. But what profession to choose other than medicine demanded the most prompt decision. His brothers

had given him to understand by letter that the personal property left by his father was inadequate to the successful prosecution of his original scheme of life laid down by their father.

The early period of the life of General Harrison, when impressions are deepest and most indelible, was passed in the best school of politics with the brightest models before him. The connections of young Harrison were respectable. The family influence was great. Besides, President Washington had a warm interest in his welfare for Benjamin Harrison had been not only a warm friend of Washington's, but was related by ties of blood to Attorney General Randolph, to Colonel Bassett, and to Mrs. Washington. Mr. Randolph, on being appointed secretary of state, offered William Henry a situation in his office. However, General Henry Lee, of Virginia, proposed to him that he take a commission in the army. Harrison, without hesitation, agreed to accept it as infinitely more congenial with his taste and active disposition than any other situation that he could hope to acquire. He was justly apprehensive, however, that his choice would not meet the approbation of his family. Therefore, he settled it that General Lee should solicit the commission at the war office without communicating the matter to his friends Mr. Randolph and Mr. Morris. The President chanced to mention the affair to his close friend, Mr. Morris, whereas the latter immediately required our young gentlemen's attendance at his house. Harrison suspected that the object of the summons was to dissuade him from going into the army and went at once to the war office. There he received his commission in the first regiment of United States infantry. Then he hastened to Judge Wilson and took the necessary oaths before him. With those documents in his pocket he proceeded to the house of his patron and friend. Mr. Morris expressed his entire disapprobation of the step he had taken, but said that he would no longer oppose it. He added, "You are going to a fine country, where, if you should leave the army, you may establish yourself to advantage." The regiment in which he was

commissioned was then employed on the western frontier under General St. Clair. From subsequent events it would seem that Mr. Morris had spoken in the spirit of the prophet as well as a friend. That very country soon after became the scene of Harrison's fame and the high road to his fortune and honor.

After spending a few weeks in Philadelphia during which he was employed in the recruiting service, Harrison proceeded to join his regiment. He arrived at Fort Washington, the site of the present Cincinnati, ~~in 1791~~ only a few days after the overwhelming defeat of General St. Clair's army by the Indians. Later, when he became a man of consequence and popularity, several persons at Cincinnati recalled this incident and took pleasure in describing his person. The ensign might have been forgotten, but the governor and the major general buoyed up all the minute circumstances which would have sunk with the poor subaltern officer to the bottom of oblivion. Ensign Harrison when he joined his corps apparently was a stripling of nineteen years. Tall, thin, puerile in his person and to all appearance wretchedly qualified for the hardships to which a soldier is liable in the wilderness. Yet with such a frame, softened by all the comfort and delicacy in which the wealthy families of the southern states rear their children, this military novice was at once exposed to the most trying circumstances.

The broken remains of General St. Clair's army, naked, debilitated and dispirited were arriving daily at the fort. The period of service of the militia had expired. The detachment of the second regiment of regulars in the action under St. Clair was entirely cut up. Therefore, responsibility maintaining the line of posts that had been erected, of establishing new ones, and of affording convoys for provisions rested upon an inconsiderable body of men. There were only three or four hundred of the first regiment and the miserable fragments of General St. Clair's shattered army. The

American military forces were little more than nonexistent. The prestige of the United States as a nation, with the Indians and with foreign nations, was at a low ebb. Harrison's situation was now such that might well have discouraged the stoutest heart and made him listen to the admonitions of his friends in Philadelphia. So formidable was the prospect before him that a friend whom he met by accident at the fort, after giving him a lively picture of the excessive hardships to which he must necessarily be exposed with a frame and constitution so wholly unequal to it, exhorted him to resign his commission and return home again. Harrison was assured that even though he should be able to sustain those hardships that it was scarcely possible he should resist the seductive habits of intemperance which at that time prevailed in the army. All these remonstrances were unavailing. Counsel, partly from his own private inclinations and partly from a nice sensibility to shame, suggested in exaggerated colors the impropriety of retreating from his purpose at such a crisis. Perhaps too, the apprehension of being ridiculed by his former associates determined him to persevere. He did not flinch from his determination but kept to the course he had planned. Soon after, he was appointed to the command of a detachment of twenty men ordered to escort a number of packhorses to Fort Hamilton. This duty was attended with singular difficulties, distresses, and privations. He accomplished to perfect satisfaction the hardships incident to Indian warfare, such as lying out unsheltered and exposed to the inclemency of the weather. He received the public thanks of General St. Clair for his achievements.

Soon afterwards General St. Clair set out for Philadelphia. Early in January,,1792, General Wilkinson, the newly appointed colonel of the second regiment, took the command of the army. Of this event General Harrison always spoke with pleasure,as making a very interesting era in his life. To the goodness of General Wilkinson, Harrison often bore testimony. He declared

that, besides a multitude of acts of kindness, he owed the preservation of his temperate habits to the indefatigable tenderness and friendly admonition of the general who gave him the best advice. Upon one occasion General Wilkinson prevented him from being sent to a distant post, in conformity with his regular tour of duty, for fear that would acquire from the example of his commanding officer of that post a habit of dissipation. By these means Harrison became strongly impressed with the difficulty of avoiding habits of intemperance. He formed a resolution never to drink more than was necessary to allay thirst. He scrupulously adhered to this practice although it was a period when the consumption of liquor was widespread.

The successive defeats of Harmar and St. Clair indicated the necessity of adopting a more effective method of repressing the Indians. It appeared necessary to call into action a larger force and a more cautious system of operations. Negotiations for peace were begun in order, if possible, to bring the savages to reason. Simultaneously an act of Congress provided for raising a considerable army. The want of discipline in the troops had occasioned the two past defeats. Therefore, all of 1792 and the winter and spring of 1793 were employed in raising men and instructing them in military discipline. At first, the new troops were stationed under General Wayne, a few miles below Pittsburg. Then, descending the Ohio, they camped on its banks below Cincinnati. Harrison joined them there in June, 1793, and was appointed ~~second~~ THIRD aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, having been promoted in the preceding year to a lieutenancy in the first regiment.

It appeared that the negotiations with the Indians had failed; so, they were broken off in September. Wayne's army now comprised 4500 effective regulars, including some troops of dragoons, and an auxiliary force of 2000

mounted militia under the command of General Scott of Kentucky. General Wayne cautiously advanced with these forces to Greenville. An early setting of the frost made it advisable to put the troops into winter quarters. Accordingly, huts were built and a system of discipline, calculated for the kind of warfare in which they were to be employed, was diligently put in practice. Young Harrison now devoted himself to the study and practice of the military profession. His own ambition and high sense of duty stimulated him to do his best. His mentor was that peerless soldier, Anthony Wayne.

In the latter end of June, 1794, General Wayne marched from Greenville with the enemy retreating before him as he advanced. He advanced upon the British fort recently built at the foot of the rapids of the Miami River. The site of this strategic location is now occupied by the town of Maumee, Ohio. The Indians had collected in that neighborhood and on the twentieth of August opposed the march of the American army. Wayne soon routed them and drove them to within a short distance of the British fort. There Wayne's force camped in full view of it.

In this battle Harrison's conduct received the warmest applause from General Wayne. The General had appointed him to assist in forming the left wing of the regular troops; a task of extreme difficulty because of the thickness of the woods in which they were posted. He accomplished his purpose with great skill and effect. General Wayne later mentioned Captain Harrison's brave conduct at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in his dispatches to President Washington. Captain Harrison had performed all duties assigned to him cheerfully and competently although his constitution was frail and his health delicate.

Completely vanquished and humiliated at Fallen Timbers, the Indians sued for peace and in the winter of 1794-1795 an armistice was granted to

them. In the following August, the Treaty of Greenville terminated all their differences and the war.

In the autumn of 1795, Captain Harrison was married to the youngest daughter of John Cleeves Symmes, Esq., one of the judges of the northwestern territory. Judge Symmes had acquired the cognomen, "The Miami Purchaser," because he had purchased from the United States Government the entire tract of land lying between the Big Miami and Little Miami Rivers in the area north of Cincinnati. This purchase included about one million acres. Later he relinquished all of it except 250,000 acres. It still amounted to a princely estate. Judge Symmes at first opposed the marriage because he believed that young Harrison could not support his daughter. However, he withdrew his opposition when he realized the extent of their attachment toward each other and the fine character of Harrison. They were married at the Judge's home. The Judge showed his passive disapproval by not attending the wedding. Later he relented and came to admire Harrison. To this union were born ten children. Of these, nine lived to maturity.

On the departure of General Wayne for the Atlantic States, Harrison was continued by him in his post of aide-de-camp and remained in the command of Fort Washington. He remained in the former of these offices until the death of General Wayne, which occurred the following year.

After the Treaty of Greenville the prospects for peace both on the Indian frontier and with Britain made a military career seem less promising to Captain Harrison. In 1797, therefore, he left the army. A few weeks afterwards, he was appointed Secretary of the Northwest Territory, which then included the present states of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This promotion was made possible by the promotion of W. ~~Serjeant,~~ SARGENT, Esq. to the office of Governor of the Mississippi territory. Governor and Mrs. Harrison at this time located at North Bend, on the Symmes estate near

Cincinnati, and there built a home. They continued to reside there until Harrison's appointment to the Governorship of Indiana Territory. At that time they moved to Vincennes.

When the Indiana Territory entered into the second grade of government the succeeding year, Mr. Harrison was elected as its delegate to the Congress. He was the first man who represented the country northwest of the Ohio in the legislative halls of the nation. His first legislative act was an attempt to procure an alteration of the laws relative to the sales of the public lands. At that time they were offered for sale in tracts of 4000 acres and consequently were beyond the reach of the hardy, but impecunious pioneers. They were the very persons who had driven the Indian from the soil and reclaimed it from the wildness of nature. The system operated on them as a penalty, while it conferred a privilege on the avaricious monopolist or designing land jobber. After much opposition, Mr. Harrison succeeded in effecting the passage of a bill providing in the future for the sale of the land in half and quarter sections. Although a bill containing this provision was passed by the House, it failed in the Senate, which proposed an amendment that was agreed to after a conference between committees of both bodies. Thus was laid the cornerstone of that system which, under the fostering care of the government, opened an empire in the wilderness. It was expected that nearly all the land within the present limits of Ohio would have been sold the very next year after the passage of Mr. Harrison's bill to a few wealthy speculators. Their influence would have prevented an alteration of the system until the grasping hand of monopoly had seized the whole of the public lands. The whole country which now constitutes Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan would at the outset of their statehood, have been under the dominion of a few wealthy landholders. The population would have consisted of their tenantry instead of freeholders. Ohio, admitted to the Union in 1803, was precariously rescued from a feudal system of peasantry and villeinage.

When the Indiana territory was formed from a part of the Northwest Territory, President Adams appointed Mr. Harrison its first governor. In 1801 he moved to Vincennes, the capital of the new territory, with his family. Here he built the brick home in which he resided for several years. At the expiration of the three years for which he had been appointed, he was again nominated to that office by Mr. Jefferson and continued to retain it under Mr. Madison until he was called to the command of the northwestern army after the fall of Detroit. He held the office for a total of eleven years.

During his administration Governor Harrison directed his attention to the disciplining of the militia and exerted himself in an endeavor to civilize and better the condition of the Indian tribes that fell under his superintendence. In his letters to Governor Scott of Kentucky and in his speeches to the Indiana legislature, he strenuously recommended the system of the old republics under which military instruction was commenced at school. In consequence of that recommendation, the United States gave a section of each township of Indiana for the use of schools and an entire township near Vincennes towards the establishment of a college for the purpose of military education. This policy, however, has not meant nearly so much to the national defense as it has to the national educational system.

He was anxious to protect the Indians from the aggressions of the whites. He wished to promote their civilization and to induce them to raise domestic animals as a substitute for the wild game which was rapidly decreasing. His speeches and messages to the legislature of Indiana bear abundant testimony to these purposes. The many advantageous treaties he made with them prove his popularity with the Indians.

The civil administration of General Harrison as governor of the territory, though not attended with such splendid circumstances as his military achievements, do him no less credit. It was in his diplomacy with, and military

activities against, the Indians that General Harrison's administration of the Territory was most notable.

The case for General Harrison's diplomacy is well stated by McAfee in the Late War in the Western Country:

"In the winter and spring of the year 1811, many depredations and several murders were committed upon the inhabitants of the frontiers of the Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri territories. The perpetrators were demanded of the respective chiefs, but no satisfaction could be obtained. A militia officer was sent by Governor Harrison to demand the delivery of some horses that had been stolen from the settlements and which were discovered with the Indians. No satisfaction was obtained, but Tecumseh and his brother informed the officer that they would pay a visit in person to the governor. They were told that they would be well received, provided that they came with not more than thirty followers. This was agreed to. The governor, however, caused their actions to be watched and was soon informed that they were descending the river with several hundred warriors. The same officer was dispatched to meet them and to forbid their approach to Vincennes with that body. Compliance was again promised. Tecumseh went on with only a few canoes, but was soon followed by all the rest who joined and camped with him a mile from the town of Vincennes. The inhabitants were much alarmed. There is little doubt that it was the intention of the Indians to surprise and plunder the town. The governor was, however, on his guard. The militia of the town was kept under arms and some companies were brought in from the country. Tecumseh demanded an interview. The governor agreed to it and asked whether it was the intention of the Indians to come to the council armed. Tecumseh replied that he would be governed by the conduct of the white people. If they attended the council armed, his warriors would be armed also; but, if the white people would come unarmed, he would come in the same way. The governor

informed Tecumseh that he would be attended by a troop of dismounted dragoons who would have only side arms and that the Indians might bring their war clubs, tomahawks, and knives.

The meeting took place in a large arbor, on one side of which were placed eighty dragoons seated in rows; on the other side, the Indians. Besides their swords, the dragoons had their pistols stuck in their belts. The Indians were evidently alarmed and when the governor, who was seated in front of the dragoons, began to address them, Tecumseh complained that he could not hear him and asked him to move his seat to an open space near himself. The governor complied. In his speech he complained of the constant depredations which were committed by the Indians of Tippecanoe; the refusal on their part to give satisfaction; and the constant accumulation of force at that place for the avowed purpose of obliging that the United States give up lands which they had purchased from the rightful owners.

In his answer Tecumseh denied that he had taken the murderers under his protection, but admitted his design of forming a grand confederacy of all the nations and tribes of Indians upon the continent for the purpose of putting a stop to the encroachments of the white people. He said that the 'policy which the United States pursued, of purchasing lands from the Indians, he viewed as a mighty water, ready to overflow his people, and that the confederacy which he was forming among the tribes, to prevent any individual tribe from selling without the consent of the others, was the dam he was erecting to resist this mighty water.' And he added, "your great father may sit over the mountains and drink his wine, but if he continues this policy, you and I will have to fight it out." He admitted that he was then on his way to the Creek nation for the purpose of bringing them over to his side.

Two days afterwards he actually did set out on this journey with twelve or fifteen of his warriors. Having visited the Creeks, Choctaws, and

Chickasaws, he crossed the Mississippi and continued his course northwardly, as far as the Des Moines River. Having obtained, it is believed, the promise of assistance from all the tribes in that direction, he returned to the Wabash by land, across the heads of the Illinois River."

In 1806 the celebrated Shawnee, Tecumseh, the greatest Indian of his time, and his brother, the so-called Prophet commenced their intrigues among the Indian tribes. They excited discontents and urged hostilities against the whites. Disturbances were also fomented by the British traders. Tecumseh was the grand instigator of that extensive movement for the development of a confederated Indian power on the frontier. He was a singular personality, a savage by birth, but of extraordinary discernment and lofty impulses, jealous of the sovereignity of his race and resentful of all the encroachments multiplied upon it by the whites. He had always been a vehement protester against the land grants made from time to time by the various tribes of the United States. About 1808 or 1809, however, he became particularly exasperated against the United States by the result of two treaties made with Governor Harrison, one at Fort Wayne and the other at Vincennes, which ceded a large area lying along the Wabash to the United States. Tecumseh denounced these treaties as frauds and charged that the Indian signers were mere "village chiefs" who had usurped the authority of the "war chiefs." From that moment he devoted himself to the execution of what soon came to be the governing purpose of his life--the extinction of white dominion in the west. Aware of the magnitude of the enterprise, he applied himself strenuously to the formation of a confederacy of the tribes of the Mississippi Valley. On behalf of this program he penetrated as far south as the country of the Creeks and the Cherokees.

Governor Harrison, at his residence in Vincennes, suspected the hostile design though the secrecy of the Indians kept him ignorant of the actual

movements of Tecumseh. At first it may have seemed to Harrison, as to many others, that the Prophet was the spearhead of the Indian movement. However, despite the vocal indictments of the Prophet, Harrison came to realize that Tecumseh was the inspiration from which rose most of the virility of the Indian crusade. From then on, the circumstances assumed the appearance and the reality of a duel between the personalities of Harrison and Tecumseh.

The British Government in Canada gave wholehearted support to Tecumseh and furnished him with substantial aid in the form of military supplies, provisions, and the implements of life needed by the Indian economy. British aid was necessary if the conspiracy was to succeed. The entire manpower of the British Empire was involved in the titanic struggle with Napoleon. Men could not be spared in any number to wage Britain's war in the United States, but a subsidy to the Indians in the form of supplies was feasible and practicable. The expense to Britain could be borne because it promised suitable counterpoise to the expanding domain of the United States in the Wabash Valley, the Mississippi Valley, and the Great Lakes Region. The new American nation was again in 1812, as in 1776-1783, arrayed against the British Empire supported by savage allies. The stakes were the ultimate dominion over the country lying west and northwest of the newly admitted state, Ohio. On the part of the Indians it was a struggle for survival. Governor Harrison used every means in his power to counteract British intrigues and to conciliate the friendship of the Indians. The Prophet was possessed of considerable talents and great ambition. He and Tecumseh had acquired vast influence and a powerful ascendancy over the tribes. They were watched by Harrison with diligence. Governor Harrison must have possessed uncommon prudence and extraordinary powers of conciliation in order to keep the discontented tribes from hostilities for five years, (from 1806 to 1811). The bold genius and extensive influence of Tecumseh and the Prophet constituted substantial power for mischief.

After the conference at Vincennes, Tecumseh left the matters in Indiana in charge of his brother the Prophet. He set out with twelve of fifteen of his warriors on a mission to the Indian tribes west and south. He visited the Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws. Then he crossed the Mississippi and continued his course northwardly as far as the Des Moines River. He sought the support and assistance of tribes in that area for his project of resistance to the Americans. Tecumseh had admonished the Prophet to maintain peace with the Americans in the meanwhile; he felt that time was on his side. Before his return to the Wabash, however, his cause in Indiana met with a serious reverse.

In 1811, while Tecumseh was still on his diplomatic mission, the hostile disposition of the Indians in Indiana became apparent. Governor Harrison now deemed it necessary to organize the militia and to place the Territory in a position of defense. Upon being reinforced by three hundred and fifty United States infantry under Colonels Daviess and Owen, he commenced his march on October 5, 1811 toward the Prophet's town, at the confluence of Eel River and the Wabash. This was in obedience to the order of President Madison. The army camped briefly at the present site of Terre Haute on the Wabash. Here they built a fort which was named Fort Harrison. A garrison of one hundred men remained in that fort. On October 29th the army resumed its march toward the Indian town on the Eel River. The route selected was along the east side of the Wabash. On the night of November 5th, the army camped ten miles from their objective. With an early start next morning they were soon advancing on the town. Groups of Indians had appeared along the way, showing an unfriendly attitude. The Indians ignored all advances of friendship.

Here at the confluence of the Wabash and Eel Rivers, the Prophet and Tecumseh had accumulated large stores of supplies and material, part of which were the largesse of their British allies. General Harrison's orders were

to avoid hostilities of any kind that were not absolutely required. Both Tecumseh and General Harrison tried to postpone the conflict.

As Harrison's forces approached the Prophet's town, they found it necessary to proceed with the utmost caution to avoid a possible ambuscade which the cunning of the enemy might have provided for their reception. Likewise, prudence dictated an attempt to procure an interview with them in order to learn their objects and to open negotiations with their chiefs. The conduct of the Indians, as Harrison advanced not only justified but increased his suspicions. It suggested to him the expediency of keeping his men drawn up in constant order of battle. He even had them sleep under arms to prevent being taken by surprise. During the whole of the last day's march, parties of the savages continually lurked in the way and hovered about the thickets on either side. Every effort to speak with them was useless. When the army neared the Prophet's town on November 7, an American captain, with a flag and an interpreter, was dispatched to request a conference. However the Indians appeared on both his flanks. When it appeared that they were trying to cut him off, the captain was recalled. The Governor, finding his every attempt to bring the savages to a parley answered with contempt and insolence, resolved to camp for the night. In the morning he hoped to take some effective means for opening a conference.

At length a person who was said to be high in the councils of the Prophet came forward. He expressed surprise at the troops having advanced so rapidly. He added that his chief had been given to understand by the persons who had been sent to him a few days before that the governor would not advance to the Prophet's town until he had received an answer to his demands. He said that his answer had been dispatched by a chief who accompanied the governor's messengers, but who had unfortunately missed the army by taking the road on the other side of the river. The governor answered that he had

no intention of attacking them until he should discover their intentions; that he would camp on the Wabash that night, and that the next morning he would have an interview with the Prophet. Meanwhile, he assured the emissary, no hostilities would be committed on the part of his army. The chief seemed pleased and promised that the conditions should be faithfully reciprocated.

The place selected for the camp was a piece of oak forest elevated ten feet above an extensive marshy prairie. This natural platform of land was about ten acres in extent.

The motley collection of Indians at Prophet's town, previously engaged in thieving depredations and other hostile activities, were not now subject to the iron hand of Tecumseh. The Prophet thought he saw an opportunity to trap General Harrison's army and was not averse to the aggressive council which he received from his associates. The memory of the admonitions of Tecumseh was weakened by the latter's absence. By this time the influence and prestige of Tecumseh had so far outshadowed the Prophet that the latter may have seen an opportunity to rehabilitate his waning influence by a successful stroke. The Prophet determined to risk all in a surprise attack upon General Harrison's forces.

The Indian town was near at hand; so, General Harrison arranged his camp with a view to guard against surprise in the night. He had been directed to this camp ground by some of the Prophet's own Indians who had pretended to be friendly. When he reached the spot, he found it pleasant and convenient enough, but it presented easy approaches to the stealthy savage at almost every point. Nevertheless, General Harrison decided the location was suitable for a camp. Almost all of the disasters which the Indians had previously inflected upon English and American forces were the result of surprise attacks. The defeats of Braddock, La Balm, Harmar, and St. Clair had been surprise

attacks. General Harrison was determined not to be caught napping. Accordingly, he took numberless precautions against night attack.

The army was drawn up in battle order and each man was required to sleep with his arms. Nearly sixty sentinels guarded the camp. To suit the emergencies of an Indian fight (in which there was no pressure on the columns), the troops were formed in single file and the lines extended as much as possible. The front line faced eastward. It consisted of three companies of militia and a battalion of regulars under Major Bean and four companies of militia under Col. Decker. The regulars formed the upper half or left of the line. Captain Parke's troops and two companies of dragoons were stationed as a reserve corps; the former were drawn up behind the front line, and the latter were placed behind Well's riflemen.

In this position the troops retired to rest. Nothing occurred to indicate danger until shortly after four o'clock on the morning of the seventh of November, a few minutes before the regular reveille. Suddenly a single gun was fired, and the sentries to the north of the camp came rushing in. They were followed by a swarm of whooping savages who plunged headlong upon the riflemen and regulars at the northwest angle of the camp. The Indians attacked with such desperate animosity that Harrison's troops soon began to falter and showed signs of breaking. Some of the assailants actually cut their way through and penetrated to the center of the camp. Capt. Geiger commanded the company of rifles and Capt. Barton that of the infantry; these two detachments had to bear the sudden and terrific shock.

The Governor mounted his horse, rode to the point attacked, and directed the movements of his troops with skill and intrepidity. A few Indians broke through the line, but every man of them was killed. The action was bloody and obstinate. As soon as it was light enough for a general movement, Harrison concentrated troops where the enemy was most numerous and charged them with

the bayonet. They fled into a marsh and soon vanished from sight and pursuit.

Fortunately, in the crisis General Harrison rode up with two companies which he had detached from the rear line and drew them across the angles in support of the straggling combatants. The attack developed with extreme rapidity. In the course of a few minutes the Indian fire ran along the whole length of the north, east and south sides and for some distance along the west. It soon grew terribly severe at the north-east angle where Bean's, Snelling's, and Prescott's companies were stationed.

Major Daviess drew up his dragoons at this point finding the heaviest of the fire coming from behind some trees in front, he made a charge, but with an insufficient force. He fell mortally wounded and his men were driven back. Capt. Snelling, better prepared, repeated the charge and after an obstinate conflict dislodged the enemy. In the meantime the Indians gathered around that point of land south of the camp and opened a furious cross fire upon Spencer's company. Soon the captain and two lieutenants fell and most of its men were killed or wounded.

The destructive fusillade would soon have made a permanent opening had not Harrison, appreciating the necessity of keeping his lines intact, ordered Robb's mounted riflemen to the spot. He then drew them across in aid of the south line. Robb's original position had been in the north line, commanded by Gen. Wells, but he had been either driven or misordered to the center of the camp where he was found by Harrison. He went promptly to the support of Spencer's men and his company fought gallantly and suffered severe losses.

The attack had commenced shortly before daylight, but at a time when they were still enveloped in darkness. For some time the fires, which still burned in the center of the camp, favored the enemy greatly by exposing the Americans, but they were speedily extinguished. After the fight had continued with unabated fury for nearly an hour, the day began to dawn. To the great joy of

Harrison he found the lines unbroken. The troops, consisting in a great part of young men who had never been in any engagement, had acquitted themselves like heroes. Nothing now remained but the bayonet and the saber. Harrison reinforced the north and south lines with companies drawn from the front and rear lines and ordered a charge. The order was gallantly executed and nothing could withstand the impetuosity of the frontiersmen. The Indians were put to a precipitous flight at the point of the bayonet.

General Tipton, later a member of the United States Senate, who served as an ensign at the Battle of Tippecanoe, was asked by a friend, "What did you think, General, of Harrison's courage?" He replied, "I think him as brave a man as ever lived. No man could have behaved with more true courage than he did. While the engagement was hottest and when the bullets flew thickest, he was to be seen speaking in his ordinary tone and giving commands with the greatest precision. The company to which I belonged, continued General Tipton, went into action eighty strong and only twenty survived. The firing upon us was most tremendous. After the General(Harrison) had made his arrangements for repelling the attack of the Indians at other points, he rode up to where I was and made the following inquiries: 'Where's your captain?' 'They are both dead,' was the reply. 'Well, where is the ensign?' 'He stands before you, General.' 'Well my brave fellow,' said Harrison, 'hold your ground for five minutes longer and all will be safe." In fifteen minutes the enemy was repulsed on all sides. Tipton gallantly led his few remaining comrades to the charge and victory.

As an evidence of Harrison's coolness in the midst of danger, General Tipton stated that at the moment the conversation ended between himself and General Harrison the horse on which his aide, the late General Taylor of Indiana, was mounted was pierced through the body by a rifle ball. It was a

favorite black horse of Harrison's and he exclaimed, "Ah, is my gallant old black gone! Well, rise and mount again, for we have not time to mourn the loss of a horse when so many brave men are exposed to a similar fate." Having remounted his aide, he dashed into the midst of the danger. In a few minutes the battle was over.

After the destruction of the Prophet's town (which was burned immediately after the battle), Harrison returned to Vincennes. Here, in time, delegations from all the principal tribes of the Wabash regions visited him and solicited peace. In a letter written to the Secretary of War on the fourth of December, Harrison commenting upon the effects of the victory, remarked, "It is certain that our frontiers have never enjoyed more profound tranquility that at this time. No injury of any kind, that I can hear of, has been done either to the person or property of our citizens. Before the expedition not a fortnight passed without some vexatious depredations being committed."

As for Tecumseh, it is said that when he heard of the battle he was overwhelmed with the most profound chagrin and grief. It had been contrived without his knowledge and had been most premature and ill-advised. It completely disrupted all his plans for after such a defeat it was vain to hope for union among the tribes. He became melancholy and seemed to lose hope. When the war with Britain broke out he joined the English and rendered valiant service.

The action lasted little more than an hour, but the loss of the little army was severe. Killed, or mortally wounded: one major, one aide, three captains, two lieutenants, one sergeant, two corporals, and fifty-two privates. Wounded: two lieutenant-colonels, one adjutant, one surgeon, two captains, three lieutenants, nine sergeants, five corporals, one musician, and one hundred and two privates. Three of the troops were scalped; but the Governor, like a true Indian fighter, was careful to mention that two of the scalps were recovered.

The Indian losses approximated those of the Americans. The Indian forces including the 450 Indians regularly at the Prophet's town may have reached a total of 1,000. The American forces engaged were somewhat more than 800. This bloody battle saw greater proportionate Indian losses than in any other frontier battle. This may have been due to their greater frenzy and intrepidity based on their overwhelming confidence in a successful outcome. Imbued with the fanatical zeal derived from the prospect of certain success, they exposed themselves more recklessly than was their habit. This engagement, known as the Battle of Tippecanoe, was so called from the name of a creek which flowed near the battleground. It electrified a country long accustomed to hear of disaster in connection with the Indian fights of the Ohio Valley.

On the seventh and eighth of November, following the battle, the army remained in camp. Meanwhile, as a punitive measure, General Harrison caused the Indian houses to be burned and their corn and copper kettles to be destroyed. On November 9, the army began its return march to Vincennes where it arrived in nine days.

There was a great deal of debate relative to the Battle of Tippecanoe and much criticism of the tactics and strategy of General Harrison. Military men and citizens participated in the controversy. Certainly it is true that Governor Harrison did not follow up his victory with immediate further operations against the Indians. Meanwhile, the Prophet remained at large and continued his plotting and cooperation with the British. In the next few months the nation moved steadily toward a declaration of war against Great Britain. The Washington Government was inclined to appease the Indians in the hope that they would not join the British. This proved to be a vain hope and probably encouraged the truculence of the Indians and tipped the balance in favor of their support of the British.

Nevertheless, in time, the entire course of General Harrison came to

have the approbation of the people of Indiana and Kentucky. More than a quarter of a century later, the memory and glory of Tippecanoe was to make him President.

In the winter of 1811-1812, after his return from the south, Tecumseh stopped at Fort Wayne and gave full expression to his antipathy for Governor Harrison. At the same time he demanded supplies. On being refused he declared that he would get supplies from the British. During the spring, Tecumseh and his allies, unchastened by the defeat at Tippecanoe, committed depredations and murders against outlying settlements in Indiana and Illinois. The Washington Government refused Governor Harrison permission to chastise the Indians in any way. Harrison believed that a strong show of force would have quieted them.

General Hull, in command of American forces at Detroit, sought to thwart Indian designs against Fort Dearborn and Fort Wayne. At the outbreak of war with Britain, a strong British Army opposed him. This force attacked Detroit and, in a short time, compelled his surrender. A successful attack was made on Fort Mackinac by the British in July of 1812. Although the Americans made an attempt to retake the fort in 1814, it was not returned to American control until the Treaty of Ghent. Thus, three disasters--the loss of Fort Mackinac, the massacre at Fort Dearborn, and the surrender of Detroit--confronted the Americans.

Meanwhile, news of the siege of Detroit had stimulated active military preparations in Ohio and Kentucky. Plans to raise and equip an army were redoubled on receipt of the news of General Hull's capitulation. In the face of this danger the state of Kentucky, by brevet, designated Governor Harrison a major-general of Kentucky Militia. He now took command of the newly created forces. There was a considerable difficulty as to the legality of General Harrison's command because General Winchester was commissioned by the Federal Government. In rank he took precedence over General Harrison. Nevertheless, Harrison proceeded to the relief of Fort Wayne then under siege by the Indians and their British allies.

Formerly, the Miami Indians had their principal town at the confluence of the St.Joseph and St. Mary's Rivers. For more than a century and a quarter it had been the principal meeting place for the Indians inhabiting a vast area round the Lakes, the Wabash valley, and the Illinois country. In the course of these meetings, prisoners were often burned at the stake as a part of the rites practiced. The coming of the French traders had augmented the importance of the Indian town. The Portage was funadmental in the importance of this point. The Maumee River was navigable from Lake Erie to Fort Wayne. The Wabash was navigable almost as far as the present site of Huntington, Indiana.

The Portage extended for some eighteen miles between the headwaters of the two rivers. It was a marshy prairie through which the Little Wabash flowed but which was covered by water usually one and a half miles wide during much of the year. The depth was said to be four or five feet. This geographicalfact permitted unimpeded traffic from the Lakes to the Mississippi. The possession of strategic Fort Wayne determined the conditions of the utilization of the Portage. It was inherent in the struggle between Britain and the United States for the Ohio Valley that this area should be a scene of conflict.

When hostilities first broke out with Britain, the Indians in the neighborhood of Fort Wayne made a pretense of friendship. Apparently they hoped thereby to secure possession of the fort by stealth. Although the fort was well stocked with provisions and water and well defended by artillery, the Commanding Officer, Captain Rhea, was incompetent. He was an alcoholic and indeed, in most respects, a slender reed. The position of the fort, on a high point on the south bank of the Maumee just below the confluence of the St. Mary's and St. Joseph Rivers, served little purpose because there were other high points in the vicinity. From these eminences the fort could be destroyed by artillery. It was, however, suitably constructed with the wooden picketing and the blockhouses of that day.

The Indians saw that their pretenses of friendship would avail them nothing and proceeded to attack the fort in force. All whites in the vicinity fled to the fort. Previously, women and children had been removed to nearby Piqua for safety.

The Indians burned the village which lay outside the fort as well as the United States factory. This establishment was utilized in the production and distribution of farming implements for the use of both whites and the Indians. The pleasant farmstead of Captain Wells at the junction of the rivers was destroyed at the same time. The attackers laid close siege to the fort for ten or twelve days and rather effectively blocked all ingress to or egress from it. They had improvised crude artillery by boring pieces of round timber to serve for barrels which they reinforced with iron bands. On the approach of General Harrison's army, the Indians fled. Only a few of them remained to face the frontier army. The pursuit of these by Harrison's men was unsuccessful as they melted into the woods.

General Harrison's letter of September 21, 1812, to the Secretary of War relates his operations in the area around Fort Wayne.

HARRISON TO SECRETARY OF WAR

St. Mary's, 30 miles in advance of Piqua, 21st September, 1812

Sir:

When I had last the honor to address you I was advancing to the relief of Fort Wayne. I reached it with the army on the twelfth. A considerable body of Indians had besieged it closely for several days but retreated hurriedly upon our advance. They had destroyed the factory and all the other buildings outside the fort. Having allowed the troops one day to rest and being unable to pursue the route to Fort Defiance until a convoy of provisions should arrive, I determined to employ my men in destroying the corn and other provisions at the Potawatomie and Miami towns of Elkhart and the forts of the Wabash. The participation of the chiefs of both of those tribes in the attack upon

Fort Wayne was ascertained by satisfactory testimony of all the field officers and left me no room to hesitate upon the subject. Accordingly, upon the fourteenth, the troops were divided into two detachments. The first was composed of the four companies of the 17th U. States Regiment; Scott's (Dr. John M.) regiment of Kentucky militia; three companies of Kentucky mounted riflemen under the Honorable Richard M. Johnson, and about one hundred Ohio riflemen under Colonel James Dunlap. The whole was under the command of Colonel Samuel Wells and attacked the Potawatomi village of Elkhart.

The second detachment under the immediate command of Brigadier General John Payne was composed of Lewis's and Allen's regiments of Kentucky militia and Garrard's troop of dragoons. I accompanied that detachment and we reached the towns at the forks of the Wabash on the evening of the fifteenth. They had been abandoned by the inhabitants for several days. About 1500 bushels of corn were destroyed as completely as the state it was in would permit. I returned to Fort Wayne on the fifteenth. On the sixteenth the detachment under Colonel Wells returned. He had succeeded in destroying the corn and the village at Elkhart which had also been abandoned by its inhabitants with every mark of precipitancy. Colonel Wells' detachment performed the march to the village (60 miles) and back to Fort Wayne in four days and a half on a very scanty allowance of food. The Colonel had been ordered to take the late Turtles' town on his way and destroy the corn there also, but he was not able to accomplish it from the want of rations. Colonel James Simrall, who had arrived at Fort Wayne during our absence with four troops of Kentucky dragoons (armed with muskets), was accordingly sent the next day on that service and accomplished it. I had no evidence of the inhabitants of that town having joined in the hostilities against Fort Wayne but, as they had fled from it and the corn would support the hostile Indians in a second attempt upon Fort Wayne, it became necessary for the safety of that place that the town should be destroyed. I have, however, no doubt of the hostile disposition of the Miami

generally. Many of the chiefs are desirous of preserving their friendly relations with us, but as they are unable to control the licentious part of their tribe it is impossible to discriminate. If we have no alternative but operating upon their fears by severe chastisement, I am convinced that the appearance of so large a force at Fort Wayne and the destruction of the Indian villages and property will be of considerable service to our future operations. General Winchester arrived at Fort Wayne on the eighteenth. On the nineteenth the enclosed order was issued surrendering to him the command. In my letter of the third, I took the liberty of requesting you to permit me to suspend my decision as to the acceptance of the commission of Brigadier which the President was pleased to confer upon me. I should not have done so if I were not fully convinced that it was the almost unanimous wish of the people of the western country that I should not accept an appointment which would place me in a subordinate situation in this army. Before General Winchester left Lexington to come here, he was spoken to by several members of Congress and others who were apprehensive of some collision between us. He was understood to say that he would make no difficulty in giving me the command. The General, however, said nothing to me upon the subject and I was obliged to propose that we should divide the force and act in support of each other. When I left him it was my intention to have resumed the plan of an expedition against the Prophet's establishment on Tippecanoe and the Potawatomi villages between that place and Lake Michigan. Upon the way, however, I had the honor to receive your letter of the first urging me to contribute towards the main object of the campaign by my personal assistance. It required but a moment's reflection to determine the course I was to pursue. From Fort Wayne there is a path which has been sometimes used by the French traders in their journeys to Detroit. It leads up the St. Joseph River and from there across, by the head waters of the river Raisin, to Detroit. With a mounted force it appears highly practicable to surprise and retake Detroit by this route. The force which I was preparing for the Wabash expedition would answer for the purpose. Upon my arrival here, however, I found that the

agent whom I had employed to hire horses had not been so successful as was expected. Only 140 horses had been procured and the day of rendezvous had, unfortunately, been fixed too early. Several companies which were raised in Kentucky to join me for the expedition found they would be too late and turned their course to Vincennes. I have about 1100 mounted men and I have resolved to wait here for some days until I have 1800. This delay, although inconvenient from the inaction into which it forces the troops already assembled, is not without its advantages. If I should succeed in the surprise of Detroit before the main army arrives at least as far as the rapids, it may be necessary to abandon it for the want of provisions. Even now it will require all my exertions for seven or eight days to place the army upon a footing which will give security to our future operations. The rapidity of my movements until now would not permit me to give this matter the attention it merits. I have noted your observation upon the subject of the appointment of an officer to command on the frontiers of the Territories. With respect to my appointment as a Brigadier, I should certainly not think that I had a right to complain if the public service should make it necessary for the President to promote someone other than me. Indeed, I should not complain of any other arrangements but those which would reduce me from the chief to the second in command.

I have the honor to be, sir, with great respect,

Your Humble Servant,

William Henry Harrison

The Honorable Wm. Eustis, Esquire, Secretary of War

Governor Harrison now vacated his command and prepared to return to civil life. Almost simultaneously, however, he received his commission as Brigadier-General in the regular United States Army and the appointment of Commander of the Army of the Northwest.

(Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison. Vol. II. pp. 143-47)

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